

NEXT WEEK: MARIE TEMPEST, "HOUSE OF GLASS" AND "SYBIL"—THE LATEST PHOTOPLAYS

How Not to Sell a Play, By One Who Sells Them

Max Marcin, Author of "The House of Glass," at the Garrick Next Week, Describes His Woes

If a scholar with a book on one end of a log and a teacher on the other constitute a university, as a savant once observed, then a student of the drama seated in a salient chair and a band of players across the footlights constitute a rival to English 47, the Harvard course in playwriting which produced Edward Sheldon and other notable dramatists.

At least that is Max Marcin's belief, and the fact that within two years he has had three plays produced and has a fourth on the fire entitles him to a hearing.

For years Marcin worked on New York and Philadelphia newspapers and following the custom of his craft, contributed to various magazines. The longer he kept at it the more certain he became that the only big money in the writing game, unless one had the genius and luck to write a best seller, was as a dramatist.

It found Marcin, as it does all except the Shakespeares, without any definite knowledge of the technique of the medium he was about to employ and he decided to study the chief study of plays in plays. So Marcin began to haunt the show shops. He estimates that during the time he was studying the rudiments of dramatic construction he saw "Seven Keys to Baldpate" fifteen times, "Get-Rich-Quick Wallinford" eight times, and "Officer 666" ten times.

Of all of these he made an exhaustive study. His first impression upon seeing one of these clever examples of the dramatist's art was always that there was no such person as the man who could conceive one of these. And then with each successive review the wonder would be further dispelled as the means by which the dramatist achieved his effects became apparent. Once the wheels behind the veneer of dialogue had been detected it was impossible not to see them and to watch them move to the dictates of the author. After numerous visits, the most intricate drama resolved itself into a series of easily distinguishable elements.

Marcin decided that not only could he write a play, but that any newspaper man who would take the trouble to study the technique could. He set to work, and in a few weeks had written and sold "See My Lawyer," a farce that languished briefly last season. It has been his observation that any one can place a play with a manager, that the difficulty lies in getting the manager to produce the piece once he has acquired the rights, and the first production, whether the piece is a success or failure, the author can get a hearing in any office.

At least his own personal experience led Marcin to come to that conclusion. One of the stories, when he was still carrying his living as a magazine writer, came to the notice of George M. Cohan, who thought he saw a play in it. The story was called "Are You My Wife?" and as a play it is now impending though Mr. Cohan never got around to dramatizing it. But the incident introduced him to the Cohan and Harris office, and when "See My Lawyer" was finished, that firm accepted it.

The script remained pigeon-holed for some months, during which time Marcin busied himself writing "The House of Glass." When it was ready he passed copies around freely among the producing offices, including the C. & H. office, but being still an untried dramatist the manuscripts did not consume much of the time of the readers. Marcin's story of how he finally landed the piece with Sam Harris is amusing.

"Harris kept putting me off," Marcin relates, "promising to read the script the next day and never doing it. In desperation I made the rounds in a vain endeavor to get some one at least to read my play. Finally H. H. Frasse did and offered to take it. I thought I would make one last effort to get a hearing in the Cohan & Harris office, so I made an appointment with Sam that afternoon. When I reached the office he said he was just starting home, and if I would motor up with him we would run over it there.

"Outside in the car were Willie Collier, Wallie Eddinger and Mortimer Shea. I didn't quite understand what the party was about, but I didn't begin to suspect anything till we had sped past the street where I knew Harris lived. I protested, but it didn't do any good, and finally we wound up at the Dunwoody Club. There I was forced to play golf and after dinner we motored back to town, the idea being that we would read the play that evening. Soon after we reached the house, Antonio Scotti came and was asked to sing a few times he had sung a song or two Walter Moore had dropped in and tried his voice

on Scotti. The result was that when it came time to go home "The House of Glass" remained unread.

"I gave up then, and the next morning called at my lawyer's to make arrangements to give Frasse the play. There I found three calls from Harris. It seems that Mrs. Harris was unable to sleep after her guests departed the night before and, in desperation, had picked up my play. She liked the first act, and when she had finished the second, she awakened her husband, who could no longer dodge the issue."

Julia Sanderson wonders who is coming down the stairs. Is it Donald Brian or Joseph Cawthorn, or, maybe, one of the authors of that musical play, "Sybil," which comes to the Forrest Monday?



May Ryan lives in a "House of Glass," but the star, who will be seen at the Garrick Monday, is very far from casting stones. She values these pretty windows of hers too much.

The Theatrical Baedeker

"The House of Glass," at Garrick—"Sybil," With Three Stars, at Forrest—Marie Tempest Next Saturday at Broad

BROAD—"A Lady's Name," with the distinguished English comedienne, Marie Tempest, who will open the dramatic season next Saturday night. The play is by Cyril Harcourt, author of "A Pair of Silk Stockings." The original cast, headed by W. Graham Brown, will be seen. Perusal of press matter convinces the reader that the piece is one of delicately adjusted intrigue. The star will play a lady novelist.

FORREST—"Sybil," with the well-known musical comedy trio, Julia Sanderson, Donald Brian and Joseph Cawthorn. The book is by Frank Martos and Max Brody, the score by Victor Jacoby. It is in three acts. Handsome mounting and tuneful music are among the promises for the production made by the press agent. Mr. Brian, of course, will dance; Miss Sanderson will wear pretty clothes, and Cawthorn will "comede."

GARRICK—"The House of Glass," by Max Marcin. It is a drama built on the aphorism from which it takes its name. Mary Ryan heads the company, which also includes Ada Gilman, Sam Myers, Frank M. Thomas, Thomas Findlay, Jerry Hart, E. J. McGuire, John Fenton, Frederick Burt, Harry C. Browne, William Walcott, Florence Walcott, Mann Wada and Albert Tavernier.

AT POPULAR PRICES Doner. A Winter Garden show with a plot and all the other things. Jolson at his best.

ADOLPHI—"Experience," with Ernest Glendinning, William Ingersoll and a large cast. A "modern morality play," with more reality and humanism about it than graced "Everywoman." Glendinning acts superbly.

NEW FEATURE FILMS STANLEY—All week, "Ashes of Embers," with Pauline Frederick. The star has a dual role, that of twin sisters entirely different in character. Supporting her are Earl Foxe, Frank Losee and Maggie Holloway Fisher. "Some Tropical Birds," an educational feature, and "The Spanish Pyrenees" also on the bill.

ARCADIA—First half of week: "The Jungle Child," an Ince-Triangle, with Howard Hickman and Dorothy Dalton. Latter half of week: "Diane of the Folies," a Fine Arts, with Lillian Gish in

CONTINUING PLAYS LYRIC—"Robinson Crusoe, Jr.," with Al Jolson, Lawrence Dornay and Kitty

MORE OR LESS AT HOME WITH THE AMUSEMENT FOLK



Julia Sanderson wonders who is coming down the stairs. Is it Donald Brian or Joseph Cawthorn, or, maybe, one of the authors of that musical play, "Sybil," which comes to the Forrest Monday?



Dustin Farnum is never so much at home as when he has a fishing rod in his hand. Never? Well, maybe when he plays a "Fighting Parson" for the Paramount patrons of the Palace.

Throwing Bones to the Philadelphia Dog

THE "profession" calls Philadelphia "a bum theater town." Well, who's to blame? The playgoer or the "profession"? The answer ought to be plain enough after the atrocity committed at the Broad Monday in the name of "The Two Janes."

"The Two Janes" was literally the poorest production, from every point of view, offered to Philadelphia in years. How did it get into town? Of course, no manager can be expected to know a success from a failure by reading a manuscript, or even from seeing it in production. Otherwise, managers would all be millionaires, play-going would become an almost perfect dissipation and there wouldn't be the slightest necessity for giving doubtfuls like "Sport of Law" and "Ruggles of Red Gap" a chance.

But there couldn't be the slightest doubt about "The Two Janes." One reading of its book must have shown its absolute nudity of humor. One glance at its score must have been enough to lay bare its banality. Add to that the fact that this amateurish piece was given a poor cast and an entirely inadequate production for its premiere in Long Branch. Then what excuse remained for putting it into a first-class theater in a metropolitan city?

There is one very obvious excuse, perhaps. The manager of a theater has next to nothing to say about what his show shop tries to sell the public. He has handed his property over to a wholesale booking syndicate. But that only "passes the buck" to the booking powers. What do they get out of such a blunder as this? What do they get out of the many blunders, only less vicious, by which Philadelphia has become a metropolitan dog town, and, what's worse, a try-out for failures, almost never for successes?

All they get is one more city that has learned to distrust its theaters. It is bad enough to expect play-goers to remain a loyal clientele to a theater presenting the many different sorts and degrees of plays and players—drama, comedy and musical show, good, bad and indifferent—which the wholesale producing and touring system of America makes inevitable. It is madness to expect anything but "a bum theater town" where things like "The Two Janes" are foisted on the patrons of a first-class house.

Asorio and company, and the Selig-Trusty buns weekly. GLOBE—"Sons of Abraham," a comedy; the Great Lambert and company; Herick and Hart in "At the Movies"; Kelly and Sawtelle; Kelly and Sawtelle; Baker, Lynn and Company; Billy Kinkaid; Dix-

Making Wars on Celluloid Is Griffith's Job

Famous Director a Hard-Working Joffre of the Films

D. W. GRIFFITH is the most talked about and probably the most sought after movie man in America. He learned how to plan things in the making of the 5000 scenes of "The Birth of a Nation," or he would have been lost. He gallops through the myriad and one business details of a theatrical success without turning a hair or developing the slightest case of "nerves." When the tumult and the shouting die and the hours pass small his refreshment is the dance or a friendly chat with a round table of chums.

It was said, on the "first night" in New York, that only the son of a soldier could have conceived and executed "The Birth of a Nation." As a Kentucky lad, the son of Brigadier General J. W. Griffith, he drifted in the Civil War narrative greedily. When he grew up came the poet's vision of the entire struggle and of reconstruction days. In the prime of manhood he awakes the genius to make it a reality.

While planning the battle of Petersburg Griffith drilled his regiment of faithfully as Kitchener in England or McClellan on the Potomac. Like them, he had national guardsmen with whom to work. They knew the manifold of arms, but had to acquire the grand tactics of picture evolution. After the drill was completed the director took his thousands of militiamen on a month's countryside campaign. Each squadron was commanded by a subdirector.

Pioneers preceded the soldiers, to dig the long lines of trenches, to throw up embankments and reproduce the physical landmarks of the battle. Among the noted Petersburg landmarks was a high tower. Griffith made it serve a double purpose by using it as field headquarters. From its lofty eminence he commanded the whole range of mountain and valley. Right at hand was a modern telephone switchboard. From it field wires ran to his various subgenerals. Mostly these wires were in conduits underground. They had to be or the camera would have produced the anachronism of field telephones in Civil War time.

Thus, completely equipped as a modern Joffre or Von Hindenburg, Griffith saw everything and telephoned all his instructions. In the artillery action real cannons were used. They discharged real shells. All were of the 1864 pattern. When the infantry got busy they used the antique Springfield muskets with the old-fashioned bayonets. As the men charge it is to be seen that their uniforms are far from spick and span. Many of them are coatless and hatless; the clothing of others is tattered; the flags even have the look of battle-scarred ribbons. For the first time the grime, dirt, sootiness, as well as the glory of war, are accurately presented.

DAZZLING THE REPORTER By KITTY DONER

To describe adequately the charm of Kitty Doner would require the whole seven columns of this page. As the space is not available, we condense—on space, but not on interest.

The interview started out to be a severely classic chat on the difficulties of impressing a man when one is twenty years old and the man is thirty. It got into a discussion of everything under the sun—the lack of frivolity in poor old Philadelphia, the delights of golf, movies, Lillian Gish, the "Bible" and the comedian, especially Mr. Al Jolson. However, the dazed interviewer did get a momentary grip on "copy" when the subject of people who write to actresses was momentarily broached.

Miss Doner took out of a diminutive blue bag a crumpled but excited-looking letter. "You don't get behind," she was asked. And she gave the interviewer the shock of his life when she told him most of them came from ladies out front. "They range all the way from cool requests for photographs to the most lurid appreciations," was the way she put it, and they do make life more interesting. "But one can't spend all one's time answering such stuff," she remarked. "I remember a few that I answered; one, in particular, from a little girl in Philadelphia who wanted to know how I kept my hair so slick. Another was from a woman who wrote a portrait because he was being initiated into a fraternity and the rules demanded that he produce his favorite actress's photo. Pretty good."

Stripped of its social verbiage, the talk that followed disclosed such facts as these about the little boy-girl of "Robbie": "I met her in the city when she was fourteen, wasn't a boy originally, but played a girl in 'The Candy Shop.' In revised form and under the impressionistic of G. M. Anderson ('Broncho Billy') in California; raucous, too; parents old-timers on the 'big time'; has a brother who's just been married and a sister; possesses what have been called 'cross-eyed teeth'; has her 'regular clothes' made with pockets, as a result of habit; is excessively good-natured and likes almost everybody; thinks D. W. Griffith is almost the greatest man in the world; adores children—but there. The interviewer's mental pencil began to bluntn at that point.

He wondered how he was to convey to readers of the EVENING LEDGER all the nice things that Kitty Doner is. He acknowledges his failure; but it has been said that "to fall in high spirits is success in life." And Miss Doner breathes high spirits. Her every look is a wine glass of jocundity. B. D.

SNAPSHOTS OF SOME PLAYS COMING TO THIS CITY

Two new musical comedies are booked for the Lyric Theater. Lew Fields, after a dash into the movies, has returned to be first love, and will be seen, beginning December 4, in "Step This Way," a "revue" of his old successes, "The Girl Behind the Counter," "Katinka," the Hausbach-Friml collaboration, after a year in New York, will open an engagement on October 11. Hoy Barnes and Ada Meseda are in the cast.

E. H. Sothern, whose 1916 tour in "If I Were King," will benefit the British Red Cross, will visit the Adelphi Theater some time this season. "Hobson's Choice," a popular English comedy, is due at the same playhouse at some future date. "Very Good, Eddie," a musical comedy, is another prospect there.

William Faversham, taking it from the continued popularity of Bernard Shaw's pieces in America, plans an elaborate production of "Getting Married," with Henrietta Crossman and Hilda Spence in leading parts. The play is a "conversation" several acts, "so divided for the audience's convenience," as the unity of time is observed throughout.

The Messrs. Shubert, perhaps prompted by the success of "Justice," will produce John Galsworthy's "The Fugitive," and what is described as a strong comedy. It is a tragic story of a woman's struggle to survive by fate and weakness.

THE CURIOUS CASE OF MATINEE GIRLS AT LAST SOLVED

Franklin Sayles, a member of the company playing "For the Man She Loved" at the Walnut Street Theater next week, is anxious to solve the problem of the recent disappearance of that sweet creature known as the Matinee Girl. "Her disappearance," said Sayles, "was remarkable as it was sudden. No more do we see her as of yore in great throngs clogging up the stage entrance after the matinee. In my opinion she is just as numerous as ever, only as soon as the matinee performance is over she hurries herself away to a 'dormant,' and instead of giving the 'once over' to her popular stage favorite as he emerges from the mysterious production, she does, after her afternoon is taken up 'dipping,' 'beating,' 'grape-vining,' 'kitchen-sinking' and what-noting to the tunes of the latest dance music."

PAULINE FREDERICK'S "IDLE LIFE"

It would seem to the casual observer that it was quite enough to ask of any metropolitan star that she play two roles at once on the screen. Not only did Pauline Frederick accomplish this feat in the Famous Players-Paramount production, "Ashes of Embers," in which she is to appear at the Stanley Theater all next week, but she did all these things at one time in her dressing room while this production was in progress. Interviewed a reporter, posed an artist to sketch her profile, entertained a visitor, instructed her maid concerning gowns she was to wear that day, and, for the first time about her car and driver, Maurice and Florence Waites in a set of making up for the screen presentation of their first appearance in the picture, she did it all.



ANIMATED NEWS IN REELING RHYMES

The Avon bard Might well be jarred, Were he alive and prattling, To learn that his Romantic biz Had set directors battling. Soon comes the day When "R. and J." Will be produced with Bushman. The rival Juliet (keep cool) Is Foxy Theda. Shush, man! Our Vernon's wife Has risked her life By jumping in Lake Erie; And Pathe's Pearl, The serial girl, Of stunt stuff is not weary. Since he likes best The Golden (?) West Fair Fatty has gone to it. Old Harry Fox, Unless he mocks, Would now direct. (He'll rue it.) The Smalleys' split Does not a bit Disturb the Universal. The Griffith "Birth" Still tours the earth Without a fresh rehearsal. "Intolerance" Is worth a glance. Keystone's still break dishes. And now hold fast— The best is last: What's happened to the Gishes?

